

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## A NARROW ESCAPE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DOWNE," "NO ALTERNATIVE," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER III. CAUTION.

"I, TOO, would rather 'meet a bear robbed of her whelps,' than a fool in her folly," Kate Mervyn says to herself; and she shrugs her shoulders anything but resignedly when she finds herself in a box at the Parthenon this night, with Mrs. Constable and May for her sole companions.

The Miss Forests have found occupation more congenial than "listening to Fame blowing her trumpet about Frank;" therefore, they have not come. Frank is feverish and excited about many things. He prefers the back of the stage to a seat between May Constable and his cousin Kate. Here, at least, he is spared a sight of the amiable face of his beloved, over which no shadow of feeling flits by any chance. He is also spared hearing her criticisms on "Duplicity," which are of an order to make strong men weep.

Kate's feelings are complex. On the whole, though she delights in Frank's mere presence, her delight is considerably chastened by the little airs of having the sole right to him, which May is addicted to displaying. On the other hand, Kate would almost rather endure this pain, which is inflicted under her own observation, than suffer the pangs of uncertainty which torment her whenever he flees the box and goes "behind." For he has been heard to declare that the two actresses who play the principal parts in his drama are "two of the prettiest and most attractive women in London."

The memory of this remark rankles in her breast, and corrodes her peace of mind. She longs to ask him if he really

thinks so, or if the opinion has proceeded from the fertile brain of his sister Gertrude, and simply been fathered upon him. If she had the courage to ask him this, one cause of jealous pain would be removed instantly. For Frank is quite ready to avow now that this declaration was made "in his salad days, when he was green of judgment," namely, before his cousin Kate came to town.

"This way madness lies," poor Kate thinks, when Mrs. Constable—upon whom the meaning of it all has only just dawned—insists upon explaining the plot so far as it has proceeded. This lady likewise animadvertes upon the conduct of the characters, or rather severely censures the actresses by name, for fulfilling their respective missions, and speaking Frank Forest's lines with effect.

"Well may it be called 'Duplicity,'" she says, shaking her head in virtuous indignation, "making love to other men, and deceiving their poor husbands, like the nasty brazen things they are. How Frank can talk about May knowing them by-and-by, I can't imagine."

"But I suppose it's all in the piece," May cuts in; and her partial apprehension is almost as intolerable a thing to Kate as the muddle of misapprehension in which the elder lady's mind is involved.

"It doesn't make them a bit the better, if it is all in the piece," Mrs. Constable says, her head quivering with irate feeling. "How Frank can allow it, and encourage it, surpasses my understanding altogether. Poor fellow! to be obliged to do such things for money!"

"In a little time he won't need to do it," May says, complacently. "What are they laughing at now? I don't see the wit of their jokes; do you?"

"Perhaps Frank will instruct you," Kate says, worn out of all patience. As she speaks, Frank, accompanied by another man, comes back into the box.

"Let me introduce Captain Bellairs to you, Kate," he begins, forgetting, in his eagerness to make his beautiful cousin known to his most distinguished club acquaintance, that Mrs. Constable and May have the claim to the first attention. But he remarks it as Kate, with an expression in which rage and appeal are strangely mingled, looks up at the stranger, after just bending her head. So the onus is removed from Miss Mervyn of having to throw herself into a conversational brush with this stranger instantly.

Mrs. Constable and May are quite equal to the occasion. Women with nothing particular to say invariably say it with facility. Captain Bellairs, with Irish adaptability, is quite ready to discuss, and denounce "Duplicity," with them, notwithstanding the fact that it is a piece in which he greatly delights. Indeed he is quite ready to do anything that may distract attention from the girl on the opposite side of the box, until she has been given time to recover herself.

For they have met before, this pair, and met in a way that makes Kate burn as she recalls the manner of it. Met in a way and parted in a way that may affect her whole life—that damages her in meeting him again—that drives her nearly to desperation, as she reflects that she dare do nothing active to prevent a recurrence of the meeting.

If it should ever get known, that story of her's which, if known, would ruin her with that correct, calculating piece of iced virtue, her aunt, Mrs. Forest! The girl battles down her naturally defiant spirit as this horrible contingency occurs to her, for the piece of iced virtue is Frank's mother!

Frank is growing dearer to her every hour in which she is thrown in his society. Intellectually, sympathetically, socially, they have become as one almost. It is only in heart that they seem to keep apart, and the seeming is growing a direful burden to Kate, as she learns more and more of the mate Frank has drifted into choosing for himself.

She makes one little abortive attempt to get clear of the mesh instead of involving herself in it further. "Frank," she whispers, "is this man a good friend for you, do you think? an idle, expensive,

rackety sailor! What good can much of his society do a literary man who is not playing at his work?"

"Marryat was an expensive, rackety sailor, Kate," he laughs. "Was he a bad companion for literary men who were not playing at their work, do you think?"

"This man is a disgrace to the profession that Marryat's name ennobled," the girl answers, angrily, "trust to my intuitions, Frank—I don't like him; have done with him for my sake; don't ask him to your house."

She puts all her power of pleasing into her entreaty. She puts her hand most persuasively in his. She puts some of the feeling that fills her heart into the glance that steals from her eyes. But still Frank resists her.

"He's a great chum of mine, and both the girls adore him; Gertrude seems quite satisfied with her chance, so you had better fling your intuitions overboard, dear, for, probably, you'll have him for a cousin."

"I have heard that he is married already," she says; and a pang of humiliation nearly chokes her, as she recollects the way in which she had heard it.

"Married!" Frank laughs softly; "rather a joke that. I've known Bellairs very well for three or four years; he wouldn't have kept a wife dark all that time; who told you?"

She shakes her head, and turns it away from him, wishing bitterly that she had let matters take their course, rather than put herself in the position of being questioned on this point. For, as must have been already divined, Kate Mervyn is the girl who rode from Torquay into Newton Abbott on a summer day, "to see the last" of the man who had been pleasing her taste, and raising her hopes, and contemplating her downfall during the dazzling days of the Torquay week.

"The fact is, you've taken an impressionable woman's dislike to him," Frank says to his cousin, the following morning, when he has insisted on resuming the topic of Captain Bellairs. "Is it a case of being piqued, dear? Poor little May doesn't often carry off the honours when you're present; but she did last night as far as Bellairs was concerned."

Frank laughs, even as he speaks, at the absurdity of May Constable carrying off the honours from Kate under any combination of circumstances, and Kate feels her cheeks burning, as she thinks of one

or two glances that Captain Bellairs had flashed at her, unseen by either of the others, from his place by May Constable's side.

She feels in the toils indeed. She can never appeal to the Forests for protection from the renewal of the insult; for where would she be with Frank, if the story of her escapade were ever told to him? What a cruel Nemesis that brief madness—that by-gone folly is becoming to her! "It has stained me for life," she thinks hopelessly as she looks at Frank, who is drifting deeper into love with her every moment, and who nourishes the belief that she has never given so much as a thought to any man before him.

His mother, by her injudicious interference the previous day, has hurried on the crisis, which she is ready to move heaven and earth to avert. Above all things now, Frank feels that he "must get out of it with May," though how he is to do it is an unsolved problem yet. Kate is the one woman in the world for him, and the thought of being tied for life to May makes him desperate; good taste, manly feeling, common humanity, all combine to prevent his declaring himself Kate's lover before all the world yet. But he feels that she must know it this day, for through want of knowledge on her part, he may lose her yet.

He blesses his mother's habits of morning indolence, and his sisters' steady pursuit of excitement in the Row—this morning, as he sits with Kate alone. The little morning room is full of soft warmth and floral fragrance. The light is sweetly subdued, so is Kate. The hour is his own, and he longs to assure himself that the woman is also.

She is making no pretence of working or of doing anything, save existing for her own pleasure and his. She is seated on a corner of the sofa, and he is on a lower chair by her side, and his very attitude is expressive of the worship he feels for her, as he bends forward, in the earnestness with which he seeks to enchain her attention.

Ah! how willingly she cedes it to him, in spite of her knowledge of his being bound to another woman, in spite of the way in which memory is stinging her about that first love of hers—Captain Bellairs—in spite of her firm conviction that they are both altogether wrong!

It is no use trying to avert her eyes, they will steal back, and meet upon his

It is no use moving her hand away from his clasp. It is no use her whispering "Frank, Frank, remember!" She has shown her feelings for him too fully for him not to be ready to forget everything in the world but herself, and so, without a word being uttered, they understand each other, and break down all barriers "at the touching of the lips."

What is it that presently sends them apart, with a little shock that makes Kate shudder? He unclasps his arms from the form he had been embracing only a moment before, and turns almost coldly away, and Kate gets her first lesson in the stern school wherein it is taught that love is its own avenger—her first taste of the agony of being enslaved by a man who is perpetually making manifest the conflict that goes on in his mind between honour and inclination, love and duty. Kate's hand has accidentally pressed the ring he wears in token of his troth to May, and the slight pressure has reminded him of his bondage, and of the difficulties that will surely beset him, if he attempts to escape. He remembers all the curiosities of May's character in a moment. May is lymphatic, but May is a leech in her power of clinging to anything upon which she has set her heart; and it does not flatter him now to recollect that she has set her heart very strongly upon marrying him. He feels as if he were bound hand and foot by a number of little galling chains, which will take an immense deal of time and trouble to break. It may be added that Frank does not like trouble, and shrinks from the prospect of it.

His cousin sits still as he has left her, only she shades her eyes and bends her head down on the arm of the sofa. She will not speak, for how utterly idle any words that she can say will be—how entirely powerless to improve the position. But that Frank should stand away from her in constrained, pained silence is inexpressibly distressing to the girl who loves him, in spite of that comprehension which has just been forced upon her of his vacillating nature.

Meanwhile drear visions of outraged Constables, who "will bother him awfully," are passing before his eyes. May is not an only child, unfortunately. She has a married sister with very pronounced views as to the proper meed of respect to be observed towards "the family;" and she has a brother, a clergyman, whose powers of trying to teach other people to do their

duty, especially towards the Constables, are never failing. The amount of worry it will cause everyone, the horrible talk there will be, the nuisance of it altogether, stultifies Frank Forest, and renders him speechless for the space of a few minutes, which seem like long hours to poor Kate.

At last he turns, goes up to her side, and bends over her.

"Kate," he says, "do forgive me; will you?"

"For what?" she asks; for she is really in doubt as to whether he is apologising for his heat or his coldness.

"For being—a little mad just now. I'll be more cautious in future. I must be more cautious, for your sake."

"For my sake?" she repeats, with something of contempt expressed in her voice and in her lifted eyebrows. "Till when must you be cautious?"

"Till I see my way," he says, vaguely.

She rises up, impetuously puts her hands on his shoulders, and forces his eyes to meet her own, in order that she may read the truth there.

"I don't want to extenuate my own conduct in getting to care for you," she says swiftly; "but, Frank, can you have kissed me as you have done, and yet love me so little that you can rack my heart to pieces with caution? One of us must suffer. Am I to be the victim?"

"Captain Bellairs," the small page announces in a large voice, which is, happily for Kate, sent into the room before the guest.

#### CHAPTER IV. VERY TRYING!

SHE is almost breathless from the expenditure of passionate force with which she has uttered her half-defiant, half-reproachful, appeal. If she were longing to greet him with kindly words, she could not articulate them now to Captain Bellairs. The utmost she could do to a friend who had appeared on the scene so inopportunistly, would be to give him her hand while she recovered her breath. The utmost she does do to this man, whom she regards as her worst enemy, is to give him a stiff repellent bow, and turn away as if he did not exist for her.

It is humiliating, as far as Kate is concerned, to be compelled to confess that as soon as he has recovered from the brief shock of the sudden announcement of his friend's name, Frank Forest feels infinitely relieved by the interruption. He has a

dim, indistinctly outlined feeling that the time is not ripe for the overthrow of that alliance with May which has grown to be so distasteful to him. At the same time, he is prepared to think Kate unconscionably unreasonable, if she does not suffer things to "go on as they are between them." In fact, this first step in the wrong direction, which he has taken, is already bringing its own punishment upon him! It has led him into an atmosphere which will rapidly develop all that is weakest and worst in his character, namely, his love of present ease, even at the cost of future ignominy.

It is in accordance with a plan made on the previous night, by the two men, that Captain Bellairs is here this morning. The plan is that they shall drive out into the country beyond Richmond, to try a tandem which Captain Bellairs has just set up. The horses are fidgetting about outside the door, under the care of a couple of grooms, and Kate finds herself looking at them with interest, and longing to say something about them, even to their owner; horses have such an attraction for her!

As Frank leaves the room to change his coat, and look for his gloves, Bellairs boldly breaks the barrier of inattention and silence which Kate has erected between them. He holds his hand out to her, he looks her straight in the face with a look that surely expresses genuine regret, and says—

"Forgive me? I'm not such a bad fellow as you had reason to believe me."

"And I am not the girl you befooled so cruelly at Torquay," she answers quickly; "between then and now, seven years of remorse for a fault that was hardly mine—seven years of concealment of a shame that was forced upon me—seven years of outraged feeling against the man who would have gathered and left me to wither as idly and carelessly as a weed—are lying."

She stops, not because words even harder and more severe than those which she has already uttered are failing her, but because her throat is parched and stinging, and she is physically incapable of uttering those words. He takes advantage of the pause to say—he has the tact to say it in easy unemotional accents in case those accents may fall upon other ears than Kate's—

"For seven years you have been nourishing a bitter mistake; give me an



opportunity of rectifying it—or rather show me the generosity you would extend to any other man, and believe me on my word of honour when I tell you, that I contemplated no wrong to you, that I would have done you no wrong, even if that ‘Irrepressible’ hound had not interfered and made me seem a scoundrel.”

“I dare not tell you what I think of you,” the girl says, quivering with passion at what she thinks his mean evasion of the charge she has so righteously brought against him; “it seems to me your denial of the fault, and your shameful mention of Mr. Graham, after your persecution of him, are worse crimes than the fault itself. Your word of honour! Your honour had gone before you took that young girl, whom I am no longer, as a pastime, while you were on your way to your wife.”

“No woman has any claim on me; believe that, Kate,” he says, eagerly. “Graham spoke under the influence either of malice or a mistake. I believe it was the former. You, in turn, believe me, when I tell you that no woman in this world, excepting yourself, has any claim on me.”

“Don’t except me, let me pray you,” she says, longing, in her impatience, to go and shake the truth out of this man, who goes on trying to deceive her still (as she thinks) so calmly. “What have you done with your wife? Has your conduct killed her? Did she ever hear of the rascality that Clement Graham stopped just in time?”

“The lady he spoke of has never been seen by me from that day to this. I tell you he made a mistake.”

“Why did you not rectify it on the spot?” she asks, in the exacting, doubting tone of a woman who can’t be convinced. “You might have done it.”

“I could not do it before you.”

“He spoke openly enough before me; but he had no need to draw on his powers of invention.”

“I could not give the explanation before you then,” Captain Bellairs says. And his accents lose their calmness and become agitated. “But if you will trust me—if you will let the feelings you had for me then revive—if you will once more promise to be my wife, I will give it to you now.”

She longs to solve the mystery—she is burning with curiosity to hear his story, although she is determined not to believe it. Her glance falls under the boldest,

truest gaze a man has ever bent upon her face.

“Is she dead?” she asks in a low tone.

“I can’t tell you. She has no claim on me, living or dead.”

“Is she divorced?”

“Why this persistence, Kate? Do believe me, and be satisfied when I tell you that, whether she be living or dead, she has no claim on me.”

“You deserted her—I am sure of that—as you would any other fool who trusted you.”

“I would never desert a woman under any circumstances; and I would never sacrifice one jot or tittle of her happiness to the prejudices of the world. Come, Kate, trust me now, and I’ll tell you the whole story by-and-by.”

“Did you ever tell the whole story to Mr. Graham?” she asks.

“No!” he says, with sudden, savage sternness. “He had no right to seek to unravel it.”

“I have told my cousin Frank that you’re a married man,” she says, with provoking calmness, and looking at him with contemptuous defiance. “I said out the truth in an injudicious rage, and put myself in the position of being questioned by him about—about what I wouldn’t have him have the faintest glimmer of a suspicion of for the world,” she winds up with, shudderingly.

“Is interest in Forest the cause of your refusing to revive your interest in me?” he asks, looking at her penetratingly. “For Heaven’s sake remember he is not a free man; check your interest in him, it will bring misery upon both of you.”

“Were you free when you beguiled that girl from Torquay?” she asks, tauntingly, and he has only time to say solemnly, “I was,” before Frank comes back to them, full of the feeling that it would be very pleasant to him to have Kate’s companionship during the tandem drive.

During his brief absence he has reasoned himself round to the belief that it would be morally wrong of him to do anything definite in the way of checking the intercourse with Kate that has grown to be so desperately dear to him. A man is nowhere commanded to give up his cousins and cleave unto his wife; moreover, May is not his wife yet, and never will be his wife, if Kate will only be moderately temperate and patient. Frank feels now that really it all may go on very pleasantly and properly

"until he can quite decide how it will be best for him to act," if only Kate will assure him that all her soul and strength are bowed down at his feet, and at the same time will retain a lively remembrance of the fact of "May having a claim on him still."

Just in the present he has that craving for Kate's companionship which few men hesitate to gratify when they can do it with impunity to themselves. Perhaps the reason that they indulge it so freely while it lasts, is the full knowledge they have that with them it will last such a very short time. "'Tis odour fled as soon as shed." Even "forbidden fruit" is sure to pall upon their palates long before the poor fruit (which wouldn't be "forbidden" if it could help it) learns what its true flavour is to its taster. Frank likes the prospect, that is before him now of a rattling burst over a good road, behind a couple of fresh horses. For the perfecting of that enjoyment, in order to finish and polish it, he needs the soft element of sympathy, and Kate can give it to him, will give it to him, if she goes. Therefore, Kate must go.

"Can't we do without your fellows, Bellairs?" he asks; "the girls are just home, and Gertrude wants to go with us; you'd go, too, Kate, wouldn't you?" he continues in the elaborately indifferent accents which never deceive the initiated.

"With all my heart," Captain Bellairs says, eagerly, but Kate shakes her head. With all her heart, too, would she go, for she loves Frank and horses, and to be with the two together, even in peril, would be very pleasant to her. But she is trying to vow, and to adhere to her vow—that never again, of her own free will, will she be in the society of the man who had tried to do her the bitterest wrong of all.

Presently, with a swirl and rush that is partly due to the richness of the silk composing the costume she has put on for the benefit of Captain Bellairs, and partly the result of her impatience to meet him, Gertrude Forest comes into the room. Instantly there is sufficient babble raised for Frank to say to Kate, under cover of it—

"Come with us, do! do, Kate! if you refuse me that, I shall think —"

"You have no right to think," the girl whispers in return, and she tries to make her tones hard and cold. But her eyes

are not cold, neither is her heart. "It would be incautious," she goes on mockingly, "if I were to go out with you this morning, after —"

"But—" he is beginning again, just as Gertrude swoops down upon them.

"Kate, dear," she begins affectionately, "please come up with me, and exercise your fascinations on mamma. Frank is so good-natured to us, that it seems barbarous to refuse any little request of his" (if this is really the case, the Misses Forest are barbarous to their only brother, on an average, a dozen times a day); "he has set his heart on my going out with them to-day; now, if you won't go, I can't!"

This statement is made by Miss Forest as she conveys her cousin up to the chamber of the mistress of the house. Good-nature and inclination combine to make Kate lend a willing ear to it.

"Take Marian," she suggests haltingly, and Gertrude answers,

"Marian pretends to distrust his tandem-driving powers, because she knows she would find it dull to be perched up behind with Frank. Oh, Kate, do go, there's a darling; do go if mamma says yes! I would do it for you, if you had set your heart on going: I would, indeed, Kate, and I have my reasons," she winds up in a whisper, as they pause at her mother's door.

Kate wavers, doubts herself and everybody else, remembers Frank, forgets May, and promises that if Aunt Marian agrees to the plan, well then, so will she.

Gertrude puts her proposition before her mother very cleverly. According to her, Frank and Captain Bellairs are equally interested in the horses that are to be tried. "You know how careful Frank is, mamma," she says, "and I am a little flattered at his wanting to have my opinion about those horses."

"If your brother wishes it so much, I don't see how I can refuse to let you go," Mrs. Forest says. Then, with well-assumed carelessness, she adds, "Is Captain Bellairs going, too?" And her daughter understands thoroughly that, for conventionality's sake, Captain Bellairs is to be spoken of as quite an accidental circumstance in the tandem drive.

"Who is going with you, Marian or May?" Mrs. Forest goes on.

"Marian won't go, and, as for May! for goodness sake, don't make May a point," Gertrude says, shrugging her shoulders; "Kate is going, very kindly."

At this Mrs. Forest opens her eyes a little wider than before; but she merely says, "Oh, Kate! well be careful, all of you." So it is decided that the quartette shall go out together.

They are on the point of starting, after a spring from the leader, that nearly carries him free of the whole concern, and a few jibs on the part of the wheeler, that bring the wheels of the dog-cart into violent collision with the pavement. Gertrude has the seat of honour, in front, by the side of Captain Bellairs, and vainly believes that he is rejoicing in the position as greatly as she is herself. Kate and Frank, perched up behind, have the guilty, happy consciousness upon them of being able to say what they please to each other for the next few hours, without being overheard by the pair in front. There is about them all that spirit of exhilaration which is apt to possess people when they find themselves behind high-mettled horses who are linked together in the elastic bonds of a tandem. "Let go," Captain Bellairs cries, and the grooms spring aside from the horses' heads, and they rattle off up the street, just as May Constable, driving a pretty little Victoria, comes up to the Forests' door.

She sees that couple on the back-seat of the dog-cart very plainly indeed, and a sense of her rights being outraged possesses her on the instant. She makes one feeble little sign with her whip for Frank to come back to her, but the tandem spins out of sight even as she makes it, and Frank heaves a sigh of relief at the impossibility of her compelling him to go back to her, and Kate shyly steals a glance at him, in order to see whether the gladness that fills her heart at this narrow escape is reflected in his face.

"That was a close shave, wasn't it?" he asks, answering her look readily enough, "a minute before, and she might have delayed us."

"Stopped your going, you mean," she says, correctly; "and if you hadn't been let go, Gertrude and I would have lost our tandem drive; blessings on the spring the leader gave that carried us clear of her and disappointment."

"What are you people talking about?" Gertrude questions. To her annoyance Captain Bellairs makes the attention he has to bestow on his horses the excuse for being taciturn, therefore Gertrude kindly resolves to make her brother and her cousin as uncomfortable as she can by

interrupting their *tête-à-tête*. This is malicious, of course, nevertheless it is human.

"We are talking of a narrow escape," Kate answers.

"What! from a tandem?" Gertrude questions; and Kate says, looking at Frank as she speaks,

"No, from a bore."

"Kate," Frank whispers, bending his head down, "don't let the girls get hold of it that you're dead set against May; you'll only make it harder for yourself and for me, too, in the end."

"We're altogether wrong, both of us, I know that better than you or anyone else can tell me," the girl says, sadly; "but I won't palter with the truth, and I won't feign and fawn about May Constable, Frank; it's horrible to me that she should stand in such a position with regard to you."

"Her position is no better than your own," he interrupts, eagerly, "and it will all be right soon if you will only be patient; don't give the alarm to them all until it is all right."

She meets his eyes steadily, and his expression is one of passionate intense love for her; but she is, for all that, conscious of a vague feeling of disappointment and unsatisfaction. As legibly as if it were a book she reads off instability and vacillation on Frank's face, and still she hugs her chains and tells herself that, even if she finds him guilty of worse faults than these, she must still go on loving him. The fact is, that before she detected these traits in him, which are not traits of strength, she had idealized him a good deal. That her passion is for her own ideal, is a fact. But for all that, she cannot withdraw her interest from the real man. The Frank he is, and the Frank she has imagined into the first place in her heart, are inextricably mixed, and she cannot separate them.

So it happens now, that though in answer to his request that she won't give the alarm "until it is all right," she says—

"It never will be all right with us, Frank," she gives him her hand, and delights in the clasp he gives it.

Meanwhile, as they spin rapidly along the main road to Chiswick, aggrieved May is making her wrongs and her rage known to the mother and sister of the man who has inflicted the one and caused the other upon her. Even turtle doves can peck, if they are "put out," and May, on this occa-

sion, is very much "put out," indeed. Calm Mrs. Forest trembles for her son's future, when May, in tears, declares that she "must open her heart about Frank and his very trying conduct."

### OUR DRINKWATER.

DRINKWATER came to us from a rural village, where he had been a sort of hind at the Great House, living generally without his coat, and frequently seen upon a ladder, when he was not carrying pots of flowers. He was sent to us pretty much as a horse is sent—with an invitation to try him, an assurance that he had capabilities, and could soon be "licked into shape." When he presented himself, he seemed a tall, gaunt creature, greatly "shock" in hair, while his head hung down on one side, in a furtive, retiring way, no doubt from shyness, or perhaps modesty, suggesting a painful and peculiar position, and giving the idea of those awful pictures where victims are shown suffering the last extremity of the law. This bucolic attitude really arose from the moral reasons specified; and I believe, in this respect, he might have sat for the portrait of the eminent domestic—Mr. J. Andrews—so admirably depicted by the late Henry Fielding, Esq., save that he wanted the graces of figure which lent such a curious interest to the exemplary servant's career. He had certainly never read—indeed, it is no disparagement to say that he had never heard of—those entertaining memoirs, but it is a curious testimony to the knowledge of character possessed by the great novelist, that he should have anticipated such a type as that of our Drinkwater.

His insensibility to the charms of the other sex was indeed his "note," as philosophers say. No anchorite was more stolidly impassive to the advances which, as a matter of course, came from the ladies of the sphere in which he moved. The rusticity which we have been describing was not considered any drawback, and indeed, it has been noted that these ladies are not unfrequently ready to overlook a vast number of defects. One day I was amazed to come upon him attended on by a lively and coquettish damsel, who was exerting herself almost to panting, in her efforts to entertain him. She was some acquaintance of three doors, or three streets, off. He was receiving her advances with a gaunt and stolid toleration

—a sort of wooden grin, half good-natured, half contemptuous—all the while striding on, as having business in hand and being eager to be quit of her. In vain, I could see, she was making herself as engaging as possible, carrying the whole burden of the conversation, taking both shares of the dialogue. Her perseverance deserved a better reward than the stolid gaze with which, when their roads came to diverge, he took his leave. On slight encouragement, she would have seen him home to his own door, or gate rather, reversing the usual polite order of attention. She looked after him with a shade of mortification in her face, yet not at all disheartened. With the perseverance of her sex, it was plain she would renew her attempts, and perhaps succeed.

I could see that our philosophic henchman was not popular with the ladies in the establishment below. He was not "free with his money," as other gentlemen of their circle were, who stood treat at the play, made presents, and bore all holiday charges. Our Joseph, somewhat artfully, contrived to put this saving taste on the ground of an indifference to all kinds of pleasure. But he had a smug air of superiority, which was aggravating. It was known that he had banking dealings with the Post-office, and yet contrived to be always flush of ready money. This was in marked contrast to the ladies of his own rank, who were of spendthrift habits, laying out every farthing on personal adornment, and even pledging the future. It was hardly indeed surprising when our juvenile cook, Dorothy or Dolly—but I am anticipating.

Birthdays, or Christmas days, or Easters—or the wedding day of "master and missus," about which an affectation of tender and romantic interest was got up in the household, were always celebrated in our establishment. Presents were interchanged, thus keeping up the patriarchal character of the relations between "master and missus," and the household; though master was often disgusted at finding on his table some such offering as a pair of papier maché street niggers, whose bodies opening, revealed scent bottles or place for matches. A scroll was tied round the neck of one, bearing the inscription "Many, many happy returns"—an allusion probably to the more substantial returns that were expected. The niggers broke the camel's back, and became, as it were, a *reductio ad absurdum* of the time-



honoured custom—and they themselves took the shape of the “happy returns,” being promptly restored to the donor with a friendly jest. But Drinkwater was not likely to indulge in such follies—not he indeed! he regarded the whole, the niggers particularly, as humbug, more or less. He looked on with his wooden smile as the foolish creatures scattered their money. He could be even ostentatious in showing that he was wealthy, and once when the family wanted cash on some sudden emergency, he went aloft, and from a heavy double-locked trunk—supposed to contain gathered treasures of dress, &c., for he kept everything—brought down twelve or fourteen pieces of gold, asking, innocently, “if that was enough?” After this, we began to look on him with some awe, and, as a being almost superior to us, by reason of his immeasurable reserve. On his Sundays out he would appear in a gentlemanly dress, casting all trace of the menial to the winds—a walking stick with a silver top—a new private hat. Where he walked, or whither he went, no one ever knew, but the impression was, that he did not go wandering purposely about, “for a walk,” as it is called. It was believed that there was some end in view.

This grand feeling of reserve, in which he wrapped himself, was supported by some singular gifts. You might entrust him with anything: to find out a house, a street, a lost number or address; and he did so without condescending to explain how. Neither did he interpret instructions exactly, and carry them out with a provoking literality, as many menials do; but would take on himself to amend or alter, as the case required, making no apology, yet all the while humiliating you by his superiority. He was astonished at nothing. When our Dolly, an apparently innocent and good-humoured girl, went away to the Mormons with a married gentleman—a circumstance enough to stagger a decent household—his first proceeding was to take a rapid inventory of the property under his charge. And it afterwards leaked out that Drinkwater had either prophesied, or had suspicion—with him as good as knowledge—of the entire transaction. He was indifferent; what was it to him? He had “his work to do.” I would have given anything to know what passed within that curious concatenation, by courtesy to be styled his mind! Did he think, reason, look forward, enjoy hope,

regret, or other emotions (love was certainly absent)? Did he feel pleasure or pain? Or was he simply all passive, a zoophyte? Laughter was unknown to him, a sort of cast-iron grin being the outside boundary. On high occasions of state, at Christmas, leave was given for Drury Lane and the Pantomime, which at once piped all hands to ribbons and best gowns, the word being passed to those with whom “company was kept,” as it is called. The note of preparation rang through the house; every one was gleeful—save Drinkwater. He took the coming pleasure even sadly. He went reluctantly. Mysterious being, didst thou forfend outlay for oranges or ginger-beer?—an outlay in the serried press of the pit, and in the face of the free remarks there obtaining, almost impossible to resist. There might, too, be the omnibus home. I suspect this was troubling his soul; and when ecstatic praises of the show leaked upstairs, of the dazzling scenery, the young ladies floating in the air, or going through manoeuvres in brilliant armour—he alone was indifferent. Pressed for his opinion on particulars, he took refuge in generalities. Did he like the young women in the air? Yes, indeed, it was very fine. The realms of dazzling delight? Indeed, yes; it was very handsome. He had but the one reply. He had, in fact, been bored by the whole thing, and was glad to get away. There was, indeed, as was one day discovered, a spectacle that touched him.

It had been noticed that he was always eager to be intrusted with messages about noon, and once or twice had been encountered rushing along the streets, as if fearful of being too late for something. This extraordinary taste, so opposed to the idiosyncrasy of his fellows, piqued the universal curiosity of the household. He was tracked, dogged, not without difficulty though—for he had quite a Scottish caution—and was detected at St. James's Palace, witnessing the rather meagre display that takes place on the relief of the guard. He was watching the manoeuvre with his favourite grin of interest. Could this, perhaps, after all, be the lost chord? The drums, the blare, the wry-necked fife, the bright scarlet; was this what was necessary to call out the dormant faculties? He was now, perhaps, in a false vocation, immured in a dungeon, wedded to the wrong mate. Those very qualities, reserve, indifference, stolidity, saving, sobriety, are

those out of which first-rate military stuff is fashioned. Perhaps he was the same as ordinary menials, only soured, into his present deportment, by being denied his fancy. Who can tell? A few years' service and the world might have heard of him as Colonel—nay, why not General Drinkwater? All this time the iron may have been slowly entering his soul. Still had he joined the ranks the same article might by this time have entered his body.

It would take long to expound what Johnson would have called the unfractionsities of this mysterious creature. He was offered an opportunity of going to see his relatives, an aged sire, and mamma of even greater years, whom he had not laid eyes on for six or seven years. He declined. Even the little hamlet where he was born and reared had no charms for him. An indignant appeal to his better feelings, "your father, your mother, Drinkwater!" produced no other answer than that "he had rather not." He thus disdained, it will be observed, to argue the matter, and put it that duty depended on inclination. And yet it mysteriously transpired in the house that he contributed to the support of these venerable people handsomely and liberally. The matter, however, was taken out of the domain of duty or inclination, and he was directed to go. He remained as short a time as he could, he rather disdained the rural hamlet where he had first seen the light, and returned with all convenient speed. When the family was withdrawing to country quarters, and retained a drudge who should have joint charge with him during its absence, Drinkwater came to make protest: "he had rather not." "He did not want her." "He would do better without any one." It was represented that he thus consigned himself to perpetual imprisonment, or at least to a walk no bigger than one in a prison yard. He did not care. He preferred that. He obtained his wish, and for two months dwelt in solitary state. What he did, how he employed his time, whether he thought, read, or dozed, never can be satisfactorily known. Asking information from him on the point would be idle. One thing only may be reckoned on beyond even speculation. As the dial drew near to twelve, he was seen flying to St. James's Palace to be present at the relief. He could enjoy that exquisite pleasure without the sense of being "chained to the oar." Stay, though, I am wrong. Drinkwater was not quite alone.

How long we should have been piqued by this interesting problem, it is impossible to say. Travellers talk of the vast and grand impassiveness of the sphinx, which fascinates the traveller—in spite of the wanting nose. So with Drinkwater, who, each year, would have risen in majesty, a stern and perplexing enigma, until he became the next to the great Egyptian mystery itself. Yet, curious to say, it was an inferior agent that offered us the key: and I was enabled to find the clue, which had so long baffled me, owing to the agency of a very humble being. Bishop Butler has finely developed the argument from analogy—and I now recalled his great principles, of which I had always been an admirer. It was when I was one day looking reflectively at his fellow-creature, Toby, that the true view occurred to me. Hitherto I had, in familiar phrase, been on the wrong tack. I might have studied Drinkwater to the day of his death, or to that of my own, but for the strange likeness that flashed upon me one day. But before entering on this curious investigation, it is only fitting that I should introduce Toby—the fellow Drinkwater—for there was the solution.

Toby's family was of foreign extraction, and originally came from Germany. An English lady and gentleman, who were travelling in that country, were attracted by the good-looking pair, their honest Teutonic manners and virtues, and induced them to come over to this country, where they were presently settled on the family estate. In due time a young family grew up about them, which exhibited, in very marked contrast to the natives of the district by which they were surrounded, all the peculiarities of their foreign origin. No stranger failed to remark the square build, the short, sturdily limb, the composed, thoughtful eye, the general air of gravity—so curiously opposed to the carelessness, and even frivolity, of the children of the soil about them. Gradually, however, as the offspring of the strangers grew up, they intermarried with the offspring of neighbours, and a sort of motley race was the result, though it was made a point of honour that some scions, at least, of the family, should keep apart and maintain the purity of the old stock. To the ethnologist was thus suggested something akin to what is seen in certain parts of the kingdom, where are found descendants of old Danish or Dutch colonies, who are still to be distinguished by a certain grave reserve,

and other physical signs, significant of the old ancestry.

Toby, one of these young sojourners in a foreign land, when playing carelessly by the roadside, had attracted the notice of some strangers, who fancied the young fellow's size and spirit, and conceived the idea that, with training and town diet, he could be made useful in a household. Many thus bring home favourite attendants from the Indies, and it must be said there is singularity in this whim. They may wish, perhaps, that those about them should be different to those about others. Such dependants, indeed, suggest the dwarfs and monsters who used to form part of a king's retinue. This, however, does not concern us here; nor, indeed, the young Toby, who entered on his new service, and parted with the completest indifference from his aged father and mother. These again, it must be said, showed no sign of feeling. It was thought that they did not clearly understand that their Toby was going to better himself. At all events, they maintained the old foreign reserve and dignity, according to which it was considered unmanly to show grief. Leaving this nice speculation for debate, the fact remains that no emotion of any description was exhibited.

He accordingly came into residence, and excited curiosity as well as amusement, not merely from the singular mould in which nature had formed him, as from the utter unconsciousness that there was anything about him that would not command respect, or at least, not attract attention. His long black body, which had an eel-like sinuosity, was propped upon four of the shortest, squattest limbs that could be conceived off an alligator. They turned out exactly like the legs of those creatures, and the front ones followed exactly the outlines of a little lyre. Add to this his long snout-like head, with a lorn gaze and almost legal solemnity—for his ear hung and flapped about him like the full dress wig of a Queen's Counsel—and it was not surprising that I at last came to have a shyness in taking him out for long walks, owing to the comments which his singular presence invited. For these, of course, his companion was not accountable, yet, unfairly, I was made to suffer for being in his company. His very fashion of fixing a sad contemplative gaze on those who insulted him, was in itself a challenge to renewed and more coarse remarks.

I began at last to grow uneasy as we

approached a public-house door, where there was always—as at their club window—a number of lounging gentlemen whose natural paucity of ideas made them acclaim the approach of Toby with delight. "There's a dawg!" "Why he's wore down his legs!" Yet such is the vacuity of these witlings, that, though it has occurred again and again, I cannot call to mind any sally uttered by them that went beyond "There's a dawg! Well, I say! look at that dawg!"

But Toby's character was of an inscrutable kind. He had a gravity which has rarely been encountered among his kind. He could not see a joke. He had no tricks, such as rolling himself on his back in dust, running after his own tail, and the like. His fellows, if they noticed him at all, must have set him down as a solemn prig; one who took everything au pied de la lettre. He did not care to consort with them, indeed, looking on them perhaps as triflers; and any familiarities he resented, gruffly, and with a rude growl, that was perhaps his way of uttering an oath. Everything was done to draw him out, to conciliate, and lead him to exhibit those natural gifts which make a dog the friend of man. But nothing was of any avail. We despaired.

At last it was noted that about noon time certain vehement bayings and barkings—for he gave tongue like a hound in the most startling manner—would be heard, and it became known that Drinkwater and Toby had declared an alliance! These expressions of delight became, as twelve o'clock approached, more ecstatic—Toby standing at the top of the area steps, and actually prancing and dancing like other dogs. Drinkwater would emerge with stolid and contemptuous indifference, as if disgusted with such homage, nay, it was observed that he persistently maintained a cold and even surly bearing to his four-pawed friend. This only acted as a stimulant and seduced the animal into yet more sycophantic displays. But the artful Toby knew well what he was about. By-and-by these salaams were rewarded with a kind of tolerant grin. Once, at a later period, Drinkwater was detected patting Toby. Could it be that here was some sort of missing link? That in Toby was to be found the key to the mysterious character known as Drinkwater? It was certainly strange, but there could be no doubt that a change was coming over man and beast.

Each was acting and reacting on each other, to the benefit of all parties concerned. And it occurred to me one morning, that by studying Toby, and finding the clue to his nature, we should be helping ourselves to that great clue which had so long defied us. This was a really scientific method, as I thus proceeded from the known to the unknown.

I advanced by steps. Toby, I saw, was fond of his victuals; inquiries led to a discovery that so was Drinkwater. Toby disliked company, so did Drinkwater. Toby relished low life, so did Drinkwater. Toby appeared to be indifferent to the society of the other sex, and so was Drinkwater. The one was sad and took his pleasure mournfully—so did the other. The analogy appeared to be complete. The principle, once established, we felt that we had a basis to work on, if we wished to construe Drinkwater. And yet it broke down almost at once.

Returning home after a short absence I speedily noticed a new habit in our Toby. He was sometimes missing, though only for, say, five minutes; still, it was unusual, and no one could say where he had been. A little watching soon discovered this. He used to ascend the area steps cautiously, and as cautiously descend the steps of the next area, to visit friends there—our neighbours kept several dogs there, who inhabited that area—by whom he was welcomed cordially and invited to eat. Innocent and too trusting creatures that we had been! We had pinned our faith on Toby's anchoritish ways, and here was our anchorite deliberately and recklessly "going into society"—society that he had shunned and, indeed, attacked with ferocity in former days.

It was felt that to weakness such as this our Drinkwater would never stoop.

The theory, it was triumphantly urged, had broken down; and I confess to being considerably taken aback. Still I did not feel convinced. I felt certain that the chapter was not yet closed. "Wait," I said, assuming a Cassandra-like bearing. "Wait: I should not be at all surprised."

But I was not a little surprised, after all, when Drinkwater walked into our room one morning, and remarked, in his blunt way (as though he came to say that "the coals were run out"), that "he wished to leave, as he was going to be married!!!"

#### THE UNKNOWN SEAS.

WHAT do they bring to us, through time and tide,  
The ships still sailing on the unknown seas;  
Whose oars by mighty viewless hands are plied,  
Whose sails are filling by no earthly breeze;  
What do they bring to us? who, all unknowing,  
Sport by the verge, and gather rosy shells,  
And watch the great waves in their ebb and flowing,  
Uncaring what their solemn music tells.

What do they bring to us? Our dreams we dream,  
Our castles do we build and deck them fair,  
We shed around our hopes a rosy gleam,  
We light the onward path with all things rare;  
We talk of love enduring, joys attained,  
We rest in fearless faith, in careless ease,  
And all the while another league is gained  
By the harks nearing us, o'er unknown seas.

There may be sorrow in the coming ships,  
There may be gain unthought of, conquest great,  
There may be cups of bliss for longing lips,  
Or strange unlooked-for blow from lurking fate;  
There may be shame or glory, life or death,  
There may be some wild tale of sin or madness,  
There may be slander's subtle Upas breath  
To quench the tender rays of household gladness.

Who knows! who knows! we linger on the shore,  
We hear the long waves in the distance breaking;  
We pluck the rose, and sigh that June is o'er,  
We sleep sweet sleeps, and dread the certain waking.  
Only one thing is real; to clasp, to hold,  
To make our shield in whirling thoughts like these,  
This one great Truth is true to mortals told,  
There is a Pilot on the unknown seas.

#### LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. FOTHERINGAY CASTLE.  
THE LAST MOMENTS OF MARY QUEEN OF  
SCOTS.

On May 16, 1568, Mary of Scotland, after the defeat of her army by the Regent Murray at the battle of Langside, near Dumbarton, fled to Carlisle, and threw herself on the protection of her kinswoman Elizabeth. On February 8, 1587, Mary, as a conspirator against the life of the English queen, was beheaded at Fotheringay—unjustly, as all Roman Catholic writers and Scotchmen still think; justly, as Mr. Froude and many other eminent thinkers have decided.

It is unnecessary to commence our traditional account of the death of this pseudo martyr by more than a brief epitome of her reign. Mary, the daughter of James V. of Scotland and Mary of Guise, was born to a life of sorrow only a few days before her father died, in December, 1542. At an early age she married the Dauphin of France, who was afterwards killed by accident at a tournament. On her return to Scotland, to assume the crown, she renewed the pretensions of her earlier days to the throne of England, which she had previously abandoned, and henceforward made Eliza-



both her sworn enemy. The vexations Mary received from the stern Calvinists, over whom she had to rule, it is unnecessary here to recapitulate. Mary, whom Henry VIII. had proposed to marry to his son Edward VI., was now recommended by Elizabeth to marry Lord Robert Dudley, but soon after fell in love with and married Lord Darnley, the eldest son of the Earl of Lennox. Mary's disgust at the profligacy and folly of this worthless stripling was soon followed by Darnley's jealousy and the murder of Rizzio. Mary's guilty infatuation for James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, then led, as we all know, to the cruel murder of Darnley, in which crime the best and most impartial authorities now all allow that Mary was an accomplice, probably before, and certainly after the event. How the nobles of Scotland, always turbulent enough against the daughter-in-law of Catherine de Medicis, rose in arms at Mary's marriage with the blood-stained and brutal Bothwell is well known, as is also her romantic escape from Lochleven, and her subsequent defeat and imprudent flight to England.

From Scylla to Charybdis Mary had passed in coming to the domains of Elizabeth, whose right to the crown she had, from a child, disputed. She soon found herself a prisoner, suspected of murder, in Bolton Castle. From there she was removed further south, to Tutbury, in Staffordshire. Her subsequent removals to Coventry, Buxton Wells, Tixall, and Chartley, were followed by her being finally transferred still more south to Fotheringay Castle. The history of her eighteen years' detention in England we must epitomise in a few lines. With the justice or wisdom of Mary's detention we have nothing here to do; but how could a Catholic claimant of the English throne expect much mercy from Elizabeth and her Protestant ministers, whose destruction France, Spain, and the Pope were incessantly planning? Why, a virtuous princess, appealing for mercy, could hardly have expected it. How much less, then, a woman who had murdered her husband and married the murderer; a daughter-in-law of the Medici; a plotter with English dukes, skulking Jesuits, and Catholic gallants of the very court? That at Tutbury this dangerous woman was vexed with restrictions is certain, and yet with all the watching, letters reached her every day from France, Spain, and the English conspirators whom she en-

couraged to assassinate Elizabeth. We know too that at Chartley she drove out and was wheeled out frequently, went to see duck-hunts, rode with the hounds, and killed fat bucks with her ready cross-bow; while as for her wardrobe and trifles, they were so numerous that they filled eighty carts. At Tutbury she rode out hawking and had her music books, and her embroidery for quiet days. Not in telling beads or muttering aves did the unhappy woman's years pass. No whisper in the Vatican or threat at Madrid but reached her through her emissaries. Walsingham's hireling spies had to countermine against Mary's. The early plans of the Armada were, no doubt, known to Darnley's treacherous widow, and she was the nucleus of all Catholic conspiracies. Many times Elizabeth had warned her and forgiven her. Even her threatening intrigues with the Duke of Norfolk were pardoned. But, in 1586, Mary, having encouraged the conspiracy of Babington, a young Derbyshire gallant, who, with six other Catholic youths, many of them holding offices about the Court, had taken oath to kill Elizabeth, even in the throne-room if necessary, the imminent peril of such incessant conspiracies at last deeply moved Elizabeth, and she reluctantly yielded to Burleigh and Davison's advice for Mary's instant trial. With great reluctance she at last signed the death-warrant at Greenwich Palace. She specified the hall of Fotheringay Castle as a better place for the execution than the court-yard or green; and bade Davison tell Walsingham when he returned to London; adding, ironically, that his grief about it would kill him (Walsingham) outright. Afterwards, in a less noble mood, Elizabeth was mean enough to pretend that Burleigh and Davison had tricked her into compliance with their wishes.

But before we raise the curtain on Mary's death scene, let us take a glance at the old Northamptonshire fortress of Fotheringay, as it appeared to Mary when she rode in beneath its ill-omened towers. The castle stood not far from the river Nen, on a slight eminence—rising like a knoll—out of the dull level of Northamptonshire, the village being below the castle and nearer the river; the meadows and low grounds had a fine view southward, towards Oundle, and northward, towards Lord Westmoreland's woods. On the west and north of the village were the villages of Glapthorne, Newtown, and Nassington.

The Tower, Hertford Castle, Grafton, Woodstock, Northampton, Coventry, and Huntingdon had each been proposed to Elizabeth as a fit prison-place for Mary, but had been, one by one, rejected by Elizabeth. Some were places not strong enough; others were not large enough for the trial. Eventually, Fotheringay had been chosen, because it was strong and roomy.

Local traditions say that the original Castle of Fotheringay was built by Simon Senliz, second Earl of Northampton, and that it was rebuilt in the reign of Edward III. by Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, in the shape of a horse fetter lock (which, with a falcon inside it) was the device of the family of York. This device was also blazoned in the castle windows. Here Richard III., a sickly, misshapen child, was born. Leland, that enthusiastic topographer, describes the country round Fotheringay as "goodly meadows and corn land;" and says that Edward IV., for his love of it, tried to make the river navigable for small lighters. The village was but one long street of stone houses; but the glory of it, in Leland's eyes, was the fair parish church and the pleasant river. The castle was strong, with double ditch, and had a very ancient and massive keep; and Catherine of Spain had spent much money in repairing it. In 1469, Edward IV., on his way to put down a northern insurrection, came to Croyland, from whence he proceeded by water to Fotheringay. "The remains of the walls of Fotheringay Castle," says Bridges, "are prodigiously thick." The hall where Mary was executed stood on the first ascent, the keep on the second. There are still double ditches, the river which runs just under the castle serving as part of one. There were two stone houses in the town of Fotheringay, called the Old and New inn. The old inn, afterwards a farmer's house, had galleries running round it, and without were carved heads and escutcheons, some bearing the arms of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, and of the kingdom of Castille. It is said in the village to have been the inn attached to the old castle. The new inn was a large stone house, with two courts, barns, and stables. It contained a hall, parlour, and many other chambers. In the reign of James the First, Fotheringay Castle was described as being a building on a mount, with stairs descending to a large and spacious hall. On the left of the hall was the

chapel and goodly lodgings. The great dining room was well furnished with pictures. A great yard half encompassed the castle. The chief front of the castle looked due north, and, past the inner drawbridge, stairs led up to fair lodgings and the wardrobe, and so on higher and higher to the final fetter lock at the top of the mount.

In the reign of Edward the First, David, King of Scotland, marrying Maud, the widow of Simon Senliz, whom the Conqueror had made Earl of Northampton and Huntingdon, became Lord of Fotheringay. William de Fortibus, Earl of Albemarle and Holderness, during the troubles of Henry the Third's reign, surprised this castle, then in command of Ranulph, Earl of Chester, and used it as a den for a garrison which ravaged the adjacent country. In the same reign the famous Devorgilla de Balliol held the castle of the King of Scots by the service of one soar hawk. Edward the Second granted Fotheringay to the Earl of Richmond, with a park, two deer leaps, a Wednesday market, and a fair for three days, beginning on the eve of St. Michael.

But to return to the prisoner of Fotheringay. Mary's protests were loud against being considered a criminal, subject to English jurisdiction, or, indeed, as a born queen, against being subject to any human jurisdiction at all. "She had come to England," she said, proudly, "for succour, and had been detained as a prisoner. She was next in the succession; and as the laws of the country had been no protection to her, she would not be answerable to them. She would rather die a thousand deaths than prejudice her rank, her royal blood, and the right of her son, and set so poor a precedent to other princes as to acknowledge herself a subject. Before one tribunal only, the Parliament of England, would she consent to stand, and before that she had always desired to defend herself."

Upon this defiance Cecil announced his intention of at once proceeding with the trial, whether she remained contumacious or not, and Mary then consented to attend if the court would allow her to protest. The trial took place in the chamber of presence in the castle, a great room sixty feet long, at the upper end of which was a chair of state with a canopy, representing the majesty of the throne. There were benches on either side. On the right sat the Chancellor, Lord Burleigh, nine earls, and a viscount; on the left were

thirteen barons. Below these two ranks of benches ranged the Privy Councillors, including Sir Christopher Hatton and Walsingham, and Sadler, who had held Mary Stuart in his arms (as Mr. Froude notes) when she was a baby. In front of the earls were the two chief justices, the Chief Baron, and four of the judges. The attorney and solicitor-general were at a small table immediately under the vacant chair of state, and in the centre of the room sat the Queen of Scots, plainly dressed in grey.

In the course of this trial it was proved by Babington's own confession and by the confessions of Bolland the Jesuit, and Savage, one of the young court gallants, who had undertaken the assassination of Elizabeth, that Mary Stuart had urged forward and, in every way, warmly abetted the plot. Mary resolutely denied that she had ever written to Babington, though her own letter to him in cypher was produced in court. But she confessed that she had thrown herself, what she had warned Elizabeth she would do if she were not released, on the support of the Catholic Powers.

With infinite art Mary held out hopes of her own conversion to Protestantism; she insinuated that the Puritans had invented the charges against her for political purposes; and lastly, she refused to submit to the judgment of a prejudiced court, and demanded, in a queenly way, that as a princess, her simple denial should be believed. Firm, bold, and undaunted, she charged the venerable Burleigh with being "her adversary" as she had before hinted that Walsingham had, perhaps, forged her supposed letter to Babington.

Burleigh retorted with the dignity of an old statesman, "I am adversary to Queen Elizabeth's adversaries," and went on with crushing calmness to prove from this deceitful woman's own letters that she had offered to surrender her right in England to Philip of Spain; and in a letter to Mendoza, his minister, had used those fatal words relative to the Babington assassination plot: "If my purpose is known, my friends in England are lost to us for ever." We see in these words of Mary that same falsity that years after brought her grandson also to the scaffold. She listened scornfully to these terrible proofs, and still demanding to be heard by an English Parliament or to speak in person to the Queen, rose with dignity and left the room. Hitherto she had trusted to Eliza-

beth's vacillation, and had shown no sense of danger. She had been anxious to know from Paulett, her keeper, who this lord was and who that, criticised the judges, noted who spoke little and who much, and observed casually, as Paulett wrote to Walsingham, the arch detector of all her plots, "that English history was a bloody history." She little knew how near the axe was, for, at the next sitting the commissioners (including some of her own secret abettors), at once found her guilty, not only as accessory and privy to the conspiracy, but as the actual "imager and compasser of her Majesty's destruction."

The danger was imminent. Elizabeth felt she was surrounded, even in the presence chamber, as the Babington conspiracy had shown, with secret Catholic assassins; already Philip had ordered a squadron to be equipped against England, at Lisbon. The Parliament loudly demanded Mary's death; the Queen of Scots, they said, in their address to Elizabeth, had been a corrupting canker in England. Popery thrived through her presence; and they loudly demanded that her past condemnation might be followed by as just an execution.

Elizabeth was racked with fear and doubts. She was loth to put her guilty kinswoman to death. In her reply to the address she said, and we believe with perfect honesty:—"Her life had now been dangerously shot at, and nothing had grieved her more than that a person of her own sex, of the same rank and degree, and nearly allied to her in blood, had fallen into so great a crime. So far was she from bearing the Queen of Scots ill will, that she had written secretly to her that if she would confess her fault, her practices should be wrapt in silence. Even now, if the Queen of Scots would repent, and if there were no other interests, she would still willingly pardon her. Nay, if England might by her own death attain a more flourishing estate and a better prince, she would gladly lay down her life. She cared to keep it only for her people's sake. For herself, she saw no great cause why she should be fond to live, or fear to die. She was in a cruel position. She was called on to order the death of a kinswoman, whose practices had caused her deep distress. Her situation was so unprecedented, and the matter itself of so great moment, that she trusted an immediate resolution would

not be demanded of her. In concerns less important than the present she was accustomed to deliberate long upon that which was once to be resolved. She promised to pray God to illuminate her mind to foresee what would be for the good of the church and commonwealth; and admitting that there would be danger in delay, she undertook to give her answer with due expediency."

To Amyas Paulett, the faithful guardian of the royal conspirator, Elizabeth wrote with a frank gratitude that was almost undignified.

"Amyas," she said, "my most faithful and careful servant, God reward thee treblefold in three double for thy most troublesome charge, so well discharged. . . . Let your wicked murderess know, how with hearty sorrow her vile deserts compelleth these orders; and bid her from me ask God forgiveness for her treacherous dealing towards the saviour of her life many a year, to the intolerable peril of her own; and yet not contented with so many forgivenesses, must fall again so horribly, for passing a woman's thought, much less a prince's; and, instead of excusing, whereof not one can serve, it being so plainly confessed by the authors of my guiltless death, let repentance take place; and let (not) the fiend possess her, so as her better part be lost, which I pray, with hands lifted up to Him that may both save and spill.

"With my most loving adieu, and prayers for thy long life, your most assured and loving sovereign, as thereto by good deserts induced. E. R."

It is unnecessary for us to relate how, after a long struggle, Elizabeth listened to Burleigh and Davison, and at last signed the death-warrant. She had previously shown anger that Paulett had not had Mary put to death without her command.

On Tuesday, the 7th of February, after noon, says the chronicler, the Earl of Kent, an austere Puritan, who looked on Mary as Jezebel herself, and Mary's old gaoler, Lord Shrewsbury, had an interview with the Scottish queen, and told her that he had received a commission under the great seal, and that she must prepare to suffer on the following morning.

Mary, who had been hopeful, joyous, and was in excellent health, bore the news with little fortitude. At first, she would not believe Shrewsbury; then she tossed her head scornfully, and began to talk wondrously to her physician about a sum of money

owing her in France. She scarcely knew what she was saying, but tried to appear calm. At last, she broke down entirely; the queen gave way to the woman; and Kent and Shrewsbury left, fearing suicide or some terrible struggle on the scaffold. In the morning her courage had returned; she resolved to die like a queen and a Catholic martyr. She wished it to be thought that she died for her faith. The commissioners cruelly refusing to let her own chaplain administer to her the sacrament, she declined the good offices of an English dean, and contented herself with a general confession. Her priest was told to watch through the night and pray for her. Perhaps, on her way to execution she might see the holy man, and receive his blessing on her knees. She supped cheerfully, drank to her servants' health; and afterwards drawing aside her apothecary, gave him a letter and two diamonds for Mendoza, Philip's minister. He promised to melt a lump of some drug and conceal them in that. The smallest was for Mendoza, the largest for the Spanish king. Every one of her special friends and servants Mary commended to Philip's liberality, and mentioned the rewards she wished bestowed. Her last request to Philip was, as the quarrel was God's quarrel, to push forward the invasion of England, and to revenge the treatment she had received on Cecil, Leicester, Walsingham, Lord Huntingdon, Sir Amyas Paulett, and Secretary Wade. She died, in fact, full of prayers and of revenge. To the King of France she wrote to beg him, from what he owed her, to pay her servants' wages, and provide masses for her soul. She read her will and inventory, went to bed at her usual hour; slept for three or four hours; then rose to pray and dress for the execution. Having called together her servants, Mary next read over to them her will and her bequests.

At eight in the morning the provost marshal knocked at the queen's private door. It was locked, and no one answered. On his returning, however, with the sheriff, the queen stepped forth; she was dressed royally in printed black satin, training to the ground, with long, hanging sleeves, trimmed with jet acorns, the sleeves being cut to show the purple robe beneath; her under boddice and skirt were of crimson satin; her stockings were of blue worsted, clocked and edged with silver; and her shoes were of rough Spanish leather. Her grey hair was hidden with



a wig, covered with a veil of lawn, bowed out with wire, and edged with some lace. From a pomander chain on her neck hung an *Agnus Dei*, tied with a black ribbon; she carried an ivory crucifix in her hand; and, at her girdle were her beads, with a golden cross. Led by two of Paulett's gentlemen, the sheriff walking before, she passed to the chamber of presence, in which she had been tried, and Melville, the master of her household, was kneeling in tears. Mary, not without tears, stopped to comfort him.

"Melville," she said, "you should rather rejoice than weep that the end of Mary Stuart's troubles is come. Tell my friends I die a true Catholic. Commend me to my son; tell him I have done nothing to prejudice his kingdom of Scotland. So, good Melville, farewell." And she stooped and kissed her faithful old servant on the cheek. She then asked for her chaplain, but he had been refused admission. Her ladies, also, had been kept back. Mary, having begged the commissioners to allow her servants to receive their several legacies, requested that her servants might be about her at her death, but the Earl of Kent bluntly replied they would be a disturbance to her; and, besides, he feared there would be superstition practised in pressing to dip their handkerchiefs in her blood.

"My lord," said Mary, "I will pass my word they do no such thing. Alas! poor souls, it will do them good to bid their mistress farewell. Your mistress, being a maiden queen, for womanhood's sake, would not deny me this courtesy. I know she hath not so straitened your commission but that you might grant me more than this, if I were of a far meaner condition."

The commissioners then consulted and granted her the nomination of six attendants, upon which Mary chose faithful old Melville, her apothecary, her surgeon, another old man, and the two ladies who used to be in her chamber—Elizabeth Kennedy, and Barbara, the young wife of Curll her attendant. "Allons done," she then said, and passed on, attended by the earls, and leaning on the arm of an officer of the guards, poor old Melville bearing her train, and Mr. Andrews, the sheriff, preceding. She then descended the great staircase to the hall, where some three hundred knights and gentlemen of Northamptonshire had been admitted. The tables and forms had been removed, and

a large wood fire blazed on the hearth. The scaffold, at the upper end of the hall, two feet high, and twelve broad, was hung with black cloth. The four sides were guarded by the sheriff's halberdiers, to keep back the crowd. On the scaffold, visible, and in ghastly relief, stood a black block, a square black cushion, and a black chair; with two other chairs to the right, for the two earls. Two masked figures stood silent as statues at the back. The Queen of Scots mounted the scaffold, "with as much willingness as ease," says Gunton, the Dean of Peterborough, the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent standing at her right hand, the sheriffs on her left, and the two black, silent men, facing her. Mary smiled when Beal, clerk of the Council, read the formal commission, which "she seemed little to regard."

"Madam," said Lord Shrewsbury, when this form was over, "you hear what we are commanded to do?"

"You will do your duty," Mary replied, as she rose, and knelt to pray. At this moment, Dr. Fletcher, Dean of Peterborough, approached the rails and said, with a low bow, "Madam, the Queen's most excellent Majesty,"—and after three times commencing, began an exhortation to repentance.

The dean's prayer ran thus:—

"O most gracious God, and merciful Father, who, according to the multitude of thy mercies, dost so put away the sins of them that truly repent, that thou rememberest them no more; open, we beseech thee, thine eyes of mercy, and behold this Person appointed unto death, whose eyes of understanding and spiritual light, albeit, thou hast hitherto shut up, that the glorious beams of thy favour in Jesus Christ do not shine unto her, but is possessed with blindness and ignorance of heavenly things (a certain token of thy heavy displeasure, if thy unspeakable mercy do not triumph against thy judgment), yet O Lord our God, impute not, we beseech thee, unto her those her offences which separate her from thy mercy; and, if it may stand with thine everlasting purpose, and good pleasure, O Lord, grant unto us, we beseech thee, this mercy which is about thy throne, that the eyes of her heart may be enlightened, that she may understand, and be converted unto thee; and grant her, also, if it be thy blessed will, the heavenly comfort of thy Holy Spirit, that she may taste and see how gracious the Lord is.

Thou hast no pleasure, good Lord, in the death of a sinner, and no man shall praise thy name in the pit; renew in her, Lord, we most humbly beseech thy majesty, whatsoever is corrupt in her, either by her own frailty, or by the malice of the ghostly enemy: visit her, O Lord, if it be thy good pleasure, with thy saving health, as thou didst the offender at the side of thy Cross, with this consolation: 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' Say unto her soul, as thou didst unto thy servant David, I am thy salvation; so shall thy mercy, being more mighty, be more magnified. Grant these mercies, O Lord, to us thy servants, to the increase of thy kingdom and glory, at this time. And further, O most merciful Father, preserve, we most humbly beseech thy majesty, in long and honourable peace and safety, ELIZABETH, thy servant, our most natural Sovereign Lady and Queen; let them be ashamed and confounded, O Lord, that seek after her soul; let them be turned backward, and put to confusion that wish her evil. And strengthen still, Lord, we pray thee, the hand and balance of justice amongst us, by her gracious government; so shall we, both now and ever, rest under thy faithfulness and truth, as under our shield and buckler, and bless thy name and magnify thy mercy, which livest and reignest one Most Gracious God, for ever and ever. AMEN."

Mary checked him at once. "Mr. Dean," she said, "I am a Catholic, and must die a Catholic. It is useless to attempt to move me, and your prayers will avail me but little. Trouble not yourself further. I am settled in my own faith, for which I mean to shed my blood."

"I am sorry, madam," said Shrewsbury, "to see you so addicted to Popery."

"The image of Christ your Lord there," said Kent, his rougher fellow commissioner, "will not profit you if He be not engraved on your heart."

It was no time to discuss theology. Mary turned her back on the dean and the two earls, and began her own devotions, out of her own portuary, with beads and crucifix in her hand, repeating the Penitential Psalm, partly in Latin and partly in English, in a loud rich voice. The ill-mannered dean delivered an extempore prayer for her conversion aloud at the same time. Mary struck the crucifix against her bosom and prayed for the church, for her son, and for Elizabeth. Then kissing the crucifix, and crossing her forehead, cried—

"Even as thy arms, oh Jesus, were spread upon thy cross, so receive me into thy mercy and forgive my sins."

As she rose the two masked men stepped forward and begged her forgiveness.

"I forgive you," she said, "for now I hope you shall end all my troubles." Turning her head, she said with a smile to the two earls, as the executioners offered to arrange her dress, "I never had such grooms waiting on me before." Her two ladies then came up to remove her veil, her black robe and boddice, to put on her crimson sleeves, and to cover her head and face with a gold-worked cambric Corpus Christi cloth. The women now, seeing their mistress thus arrayed for death, burst into convulsive tears.

"No criez vous," said Mary, "J'ay promis pour vous." The women then crossed themselves, and Mary bid them pray for her. "Adieu," she said with a smile, as she waved her hand to them. "Adieu, au revoir." They then left the scaffold.

Mary knelt and repeated the Latin Psalm, "In te Domine speravi, Ne confundar in aeternum." Then she felt for the block, and laid down her head, saying, "In manus Domine tuas commendo animam meam." She placed her hands under her neck, but the executioner removed them, for fear they should check the full force of his blow, and one of the men gently held her. The first blow, ill-aimed, fell on the knot of the Corpus Christi handkerchief; but Mary neither groaned nor moved, though the wound was but slight. At the second stroke the head fell. The blow shook off the false black locks, and Mary's short-cropped grey hair became visible.

"So perish all the queen's enemies," cried the dean.

"Such end," said the stern Earl of Kent, "to the queen's and the gospel's enemies."

Under the dead woman's gown a little pet dog was discovered, and it went and lay itself down beside her head. The beads, paternoster, handkerchief, the dress, and even the cloth of the scaffold, were then burnt in the hall fire, for fear they might be turned into Catholic relics. The executioners received nothing that was hers, though they tried to carry off her crucifix. Her body was immediately taken into the great chamber, and embalmed by the surgeons.

So, in her forty-sixth year, and the eighteenth of her imprisonment, ended the sorrows and crimes of the fair pupil of the Medici. On Sunday night, July 30,

Mary's body was carried by torch-light to Peterborough, and the next day, at ten a.m., buried in the cathedral, near the body of John, last abbot and first bishop of that venerable church.

## THE COUNTRY COUSIN.

### IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

OLD Tony Spence kept a second-hand book shop at the corner of a back street in the busy town of Smokeford; a brown dingy little place with dusty windows, through which the light came feebly and yellowly. From the door one could peer down the narrow interior, with its book-lined walls and strip of counter, to the twinkling fire at the far end, where the old fellow sat in his arm-chair, poring over ancient editions, and making acquaintance with the latest acquisitions to his stock. He was a dreamy-looking old man, with a parchment-like face and a snuff-coloured coat, and seemed made of the same stuff as the books among which he lived, with their dusty-brown covers and pages yellowed by time. He had been a school-master in his youth, and had wandered a good deal about the world, and picked up odds and ends of a queer kind of knowledge. Of late years he had developed a literary turn, and now and again gave forth to his generation a book full of quaint conceits, a sort of mosaic fragment of some of the scraps of knowledge and observation stored up in his brain, which was as full of incongruous images as a curiosity shop. In the morning he used to turn out of his shuttered dwelling about six, when there was light, and go roving out of the town to the downs beyond it, where he would stroll along with his hands behind his back and his head thrown upward, musing over many things he found puzzling, and some that he found delightful in the world.

His house consisted of four chambers, and a kitchen above a ladder-like stair, which led up out of the bookshelves; and his family of an ancient housekeeper, a large tom-cat, and his daughter Hetty, soon to be increased by the addition of a young girl, the child of his dead sister, to whom he had promised to give a shelter for a time. Hetty was often both hands and eyes to him, and wrote down oddities at his dictation when the evening candles burned too faintly, or his spectacles had got dim—oddities whose flavour was not seldom sharpened or sweetened by the sentiment or wit of the amanuensis.

"That's not mine, Hetty; that's your own!" the old man would cry.

"Only to try how it would go, father."

"'Tis good, my little girl; go on."

And thus in scribbling on rusty foolscap, and poring into musty volumes, tending a small roof-garden, and sketching fancies in the chimney-corner, Hetty had grown to be a woman almost without knowing it.

She possessed her father's good sense, with more imagination than was ever owned by the bookseller. She saw pictures with closed eyes, and wove her thoughts in a sort of poetry which never got written down, giving audience to strange assemblages in her dingy chamber, where a faded curtain of tawny damask did duty for arras, and some rich dark woodcuts pasted on the brown walls stood for gems of the old masters in her eyes. Lying on her bed with hands folded and eyes wide open, she first decorated then peopled her room, while the moonshine glimmered across the shadows that hung from roof and beam. Sleep always surprised her in fantastic company, and with gorgeous surroundings, but waking found her contented with her realities. She was out of her window early, tending the flowers which flourished wonderfully between sloping roofs, in a nook where the chimneys luckily stood aside, as if to let the sun in across many obstacles upon the garden.

One summer morning she was admiring the crimson and yellow of a fine tulip which had just opened, when a young man appeared, threading his way out of a distance of house-tops, stepping carefully along the leads as he approached Hetty's flowerbeds, and smiling to see her kneeling on the tiles of a sloping roof and clinging to a chimney for support. He carried in his hand a piece of half-sculptured wood and an instrument for carving. Hetty, looking up, greeted him with a happy smile, and he sat on the roof beside her, and praised the tulips and chipped his wood, while the sun rose right above the chimneys, and gilded the red-tiled roofs and flamed through the wreaths of smoke that went silently curling up to heaven above their heads, like the incense of morning prayer out of the dwellings.

"I have got a pretty idea for your carving," said Hetty, still gazing into the flower as if she saw her fancy there. "I dreamed last night of a beautiful face, half wrapped up in lilies, like a vision of Undine."

I shall sketch it for you this evening, and you will see what you can make of it."

"What a useful wife you will be!" said the young man. "If I do not become a skilful artist it need not be for want of help. Even your dreams you turn to account for me."

"They are not dreams," said Hetty, merrily. "They are adventures. A broomstick arrives for me at the window here at night, and I am travelling round the world on it when you are asleep. I visit very queer places, and see things that I could not describe to you. But I take care to pick up anything that seems likely to be of use."

Hetty stood up and leaned back laughingly against the red-brick chimney, with the morning sunshine falling all around her. She was not very handsome, but looked now quite beautiful, with her smiling grey eyes and spiritual forehead, and the dimples all a-quiver in her soft pale cheeks. She had not yet bound up her dark hair for the day, and it lay like a rich mantle over her head and shoulders.

"I want to talk to you about something, Hetty. I have made up my mind to go abroad, and see the carvings in the churches; and we might live awhile in the Tyrol, and learn something there."

"Oh, Anthony!" the girl clasped her hands softly together, and gazed at her lover. "Is it possible we could have been born for such good fortune?"

Anthony was a young man who had come to the town without friends, to learn furniture-making, and developing a taste for carving in wood, had turned his attention to that, instead of to the coarser part of the business. His love of reading had led him to make acquaintance with the old book-man and his daughter. Evening after evening he had passed, poring over Tony Spence's stores, and growing to look on the book-lined chimney-corner as his home. He and Hetty had been plighted since Christmas, and it was now June.

That evening, when the evening meal was spread in the sitting-room above the shops, Anthony came up the ladder out of the book-shelves, just as Hetty appeared at another door carrying a dish of pancakes. The old man was in his chair by the fire, his spectacles off duty thrust up into his hair, gazing between the bars, ruminating over something that Hetty had told him.

"So," he said, looking up from under his shaggy brows, as Anthony sat down

before him at the fire, "So you want to be off to travel! It's coming true what I told you the day you asked me for Hetty. I said you were a rover, didn't I?"

"Yes," said Anthony, smiling and tossing back his hair, "but you meant a different kind of a rover. I have not moved from Hetty. I shall not move a mile without Hetty. And you too, sir, you must come with us."

Old Spence lay back in his chair, and peered through half-closed eyes at the speaker. Anthony had a bright keen face, with rapidly changing expressions, spoke quickly and decidedly, with a charm in his pleasant voice, and had a general look of skilfulness and cleverness about him. There was not to be seen in his eyes that patient dreamy light which is shed from the soul of the artist; but that was in Hetty's eyes, and would be supplied to him now and evermore to make him really a poet in his craft. Hetty's fancies were to be woven into his carvings that he might be famous.

"I don't know about breaking up and going abroad," said the old book-worm. "I'm too old for it, I'm afraid. Leaving the chimney corner, and floating away off into the Nibelungen Land! You two must go without me, if go you must."

"I will not leave you alone, father," said Hetty.

"And I will not go without Hetty," said Anthony. "In the meantime, just for play, let us look over the maps and guide-books."

These were brought down, and after some poring the old man fell asleep, and the young people pursued their way from town to town and from village to village, across mountains and rivers, till they finally settled themselves in the Bavarian Tyrol. From a pretty home they could see pine-covered peaks and distant glaciers, and within doors they possessed many curious things to which they were unaccustomed.

"And I wonder if the mountains are so blue and the lakes of that wonderful jasper colour which we see in pictures," said Hetty. "How beautiful life must be in the midst of it all!"

"Yes," said Anthony, "and Hetty, you shall wear a round-peaked hat with silver tassels on the brim, and your hair in two long plaits coming down your back. 'Tis well you have such splendid hair," he said, touching her heavy braids with loving pride in his eyes and finger-ends.

Hetty blushed with delight and looked all round the familiar room, seeing blue



mountains and dizzy villages perched on heights, people in strange costumes, brass-capped steeples, and strange wooden shrines, all lying before her under a glittering sun. Twilight was falling, the homely objects in the room were getting dim, the dream-world was round her, and with her hand in Anthony's she could imagine that they two were already roaming through its labyrinths together. It was not that in reality she could have quitted the old home without regret; but the home was still there, and the visions of the future had only floated in to beautify it. They had not pushed away the old walls, but only covered them with bloom.

The love of Anthony and Hetty was singularly fitting. He had gradually and deliberately chosen to draw her to him for the happiness and comfort of his life; his character was all restlessness, and hers was full of repose. She refreshed him, and the sight of her face and sound of her voice were as necessary to him as his daily bread. Hetty's was that spiritual love which spins a halo of light round the creature that leans upon it, and garners everything sweet to feed a holy fire that is to burn through all eternity. In the hush of her nature a bird of joy was perpetually singing, and its music was heard by all who came in contact with her. No small clouds of selfishness came between her and the sun. She knew her meetness for Anthony and her usefulness to his welfare, and this knowledge lay at the root of her content.

It was quite dusk, and the scrubby lines on the maps which marked the mountains of Hetty's dreamland were no longer discernible to peering eyes, when a faint tinging was heard from the shop-bell below. The lovers did not mind it. It might be a note from the little brazen belfry up among the pines against the Tyrolese sky, or from the chiming necklace of a mule plodding along the edge of the precipice, or from the tossing head of the leader of a herd on a neighbouring Alp; or it might be the little pot-boy bringing the beer for Sib's supper. Sib, the old serving-woman, had come to the latter conclusion, for she was heard descending by a back way to open the door.

After an interval of some minutes there was a sound of feet ascending the ladder, and the door of the sitting room was thrown open. The light figure of a girl appeared in the doorway, and behind followed Sib, holding a lamp above her head.

"Who is it?" cried Hetty, springing forward. "Ah, it must be Primula, my cousin from the country. Come in, dear; you are welcome!" and she threw an arm round the glimmering figure and drew it into the room. "Sib, put down the lamp and get some supper for her. Father, wake up! here is your niece at last. Tell us about your journey, cousin, and let me take your bonnet."

Hetty took the girl's hat off, and stood wondering at the beauty of her visitor.

Primula's father had brought her up in a country village where he had died and left her. She had come to her uncle, who had offered to place her with a dress-maker in Smokeford. The fashions of Smokeford would be eagerly sought at Moor-edge, and it was expected that Primula would make a good livelihood on her return, with her thimble in her pocket and her trade at her finger-ends.

She had been named by a hedgerow-loving mother, who died eighteen years ago in the spring-time, and left her newly-born infant behind her in the budding world. The motherless girl had, as if by an instinct of nature, grown up to womanhood modelled on her mother's fancy for the delicate flower whose name she bore. She had glistening yellow hair, lying in smooth uneven-edged folds across her low fair forehead. A liquid light lay under the rims of her heavy white eyelids, and over all her features there was a mellow and exquisite paleness, warmed only by the faintest rose-blush on her cheeks and lips. She wore a very straight and faded calico gown, her shawl was darned, and her straw hat was burned by the sun.

"She is very lovely—prettier far than I," thought Hetty, with that slight pang which even a generous young girl may feel for a moment when she sees another by her side who must make her look homely in the eyes of her lover. "But I will not envy her, I will love her instead," was the next thought; and she threw her arms round the stranger and kissed her.

Primula seemed surprised at the embrace.

"I did not think you would be so glad to see me," she said. "People said you would find me a deal of trouble."

Old Spence was now awake and taking his share in the scene.

"Bless me! bless me!" he cried, "you are like your mother! a sweet woman, but with no brains at all, nor strength of mind. Nay, don't cry, child! I did not mean to hurt you. I have a way of my

own of speaking out my thoughts. Hetty does not mind it, nor must you."

Primula was trembling, and had begun to cry; and Hetty and Anthony drew nearer and comforted her.

#### CHAPTER II.

"THIS is a dull place, after all," said Primula next day, when Hetty, having shown her everything in the house, took her a walk through the best streets to see the shops. "I thought that in a town one would see gay ladies walking about, and soldiers in red coats, and a great deal of amusement going on about us. Moor-edge is as good nearly, and there isn't so much smoke."

"You thought it was a city," said Hetty, laughing. "I never thought about it being dull, but perhaps it is. We have gay ladies in Smokeford, but they do not walk about in the streets. You may meet them sometimes in their carriages. It is a manufacturing town, and that makes the smoke. I don't wonder at all that Moor-edge should be prettier."

"Oh, there is a lady! Look at her hat! and there is certainly embroidery on her dress. I should like a dress like that, only I've got no money. Do you never see any company in your house, cousin Hetty?"

"Anthony comes often," said Hetty, happily, "and others come in and out, but we have nothing you could call company. You will see more of life when you go to the milliner's. There will be other young girls, and you will find it pleasant."

"I ought to have a better dress to go in," said Primula. "All the girls in the shops are nicely dressed. Have you got any money, cousin Hetty?" she added, hesitatingly.

Hetty blushed and was embarrassed for a moment. She had indeed a pound, the savings of years, about the expending of which she had made many a scheme—a present for her father or for Anthony, she had not quite decided. Well, here was her cousin who wanted clothing. She could not refuse her.

"I have a pound," said Hetty, faintly, "and you can buy what you please with it."

"Oh, thank you," said her cousin. "Let us go in and buy the dress at once!" And they went into the finest shop, where the counter was soon covered with materials for their choice.

"This lilac is charming," said Primula, longingly. "What a pity it is so dear."

"The grey is almost as nice," said Hetty; "and I assure you it will wear much better."

"Do you think you have not got five shillings more?" pleaded Primula. "The lilac is so much prettier!"

"No," said Hetty, in distress; "indeed I have not a penny more."

"The young lady can pay me at some other time," said the shopman, seeing the grieved look on Primula's face.

"Oh, thank you!" murmured Primula, gazing at him gratefully.

"No, no, cousin; you must not indeed think of going into debt," said Hetty. "Come home and let us talk about it."

"Ah, I shall never get it," said Primula, with a heavy sigh, and the tears rushed into her eyes.

"I will take off the five shillings," said the fascinated shopman. "You may have the lilac for the same price as the grey."

Primula blushed scarlet, and murmured some tremulous enraptured thanks; and the shopman bowed her out of the shop with the parcel in her arms.

Though Primula was going to be a dressmaker, Hetty had to make this particular dress. "I don't know how to do it yet, cousin," said Primula; "at least not the cutting out." When the cutting out was done, the owner of the dress was not at all inclined for the trouble of sewing it. Hetty had turned her room into a work-room, and stitched with good-will, while the new inmate of the chamber sat on the little bed which had been set up for her own accommodation in the corner, and entertained Hetty with her prattle about the life at Moor-edge, the number of the neighbours' cows, and the flavour of their butter; the dances on the green in summer-time, the pleasure of being elected Queen of the May. When the dress was finished and put on, Primula willingly took her steps to a house in a prominent street, with "Miss Betty Flounce" on a brass plate on the door, and was stared at on her first appearance by all the new apprentices, who never had had so pretty a creature among them before.

Summer was past, and the dark evenings had begun.

"Anthony," said Hetty one day, "Your work-place is near to Primula's. Could you call for her every evening and bring her home?"

Anthony changed colour, and looked at Hetty in surprise.

"Not if it annoys you," said Hetty, quickly; "but I don't think you would find it much trouble. She is greatly remarked in the streets, and some one who

calls himself a gentleman has been following her about lately."

Anthony frowned. "I should not wonder," he said, angrily; "she is a thoughtless creature."

"You need not be so hard on her," said Hetty. "She is soft and childlike, and does not know how to speak to people and frighten them off."

"Well, I will be her knight, only to please you," said Anthony. "And see, here is the carving of the design out of your dream. Don't you remember?"

"The face among the lilies!" cried Hetty, examining it. "And it has turned out quite beautiful. Why, Anthony, I declare it looks like Primula!"

"So it does, indeed," said Anthony, turning away.

"I suppose her face must have come in my dreams," said Hetty, "for I never had seen her when this was designed. I have heard of dreams foreshadowing things, but I never believed it. However, you could not have a lovelier model, I am sure."

"No," said Anthony; and thenceforth he called for Primula every evening and brought her home. Sometimes Hetty came to meet them; more often she remained at home to have the tea ready. At first Primula did not like being so escorted, for she had made many acquaintances, and had been accustomed to stop and say good evening to various friends whom she met on her way from Miss Flounce's door. And Anthony walked by her side like a policeman, and kept everybody at a distance. But she had to submit.

"Hetty," said Anthony, one day, when things had gone on like this for some time, "don't you think it is time she was going home?"

"What! Primula?" cried Hetty, surprised. "Why, no; she does not think of it: nor we, neither!"

"She is sometimes in the way," said Anthony, moodily.

"I never saw you so unkind," said Hetty. "Poor little Primula, whom everybody loves!"

"You and I are not the same to each other since she came."

"Oh, Anthony!"

"We never have any private talks together now. You never speak as you used, because Primula is present, and she does not understand you."

"I have noticed that," said Hetty; "but I thought you did not. I believed it was not my fault. You often talk to Primula about

the things that please her. I thought it seemed to amuse you, and so I was content."

Anthony lifted Hetty's little brown hand off the table, and kissed it; then he turned away without another word, and went out of the house.

The kitchen was a pleasant enough place that evening, with firelight twinkling on the lattice-windows; coppers glinting on the walls; Hetty making cakes at a long table; Anthony smoking in the chimney-corner; while Primula moved about with a sort of frolicsome grace of her own, teasing Hetty and prattling to Anthony, playing tricks on the cat, and provoking old Sib, by taking liberties with the bellows to make sparks fly up the chimney. She stole some dough from Hetty, and kneaded it into a grotesque-looking face, glancing roguishly at Anthony, while she shaped eyes and nose and mouth.

"What are you doing, you foolish kitten?" said Anthony, taking the pipe from his lips.

"Making a model for your carving, sir," and Primula displayed her handiwork.

"Bake it," said Anthony, "and let me eat it; and who knows but it may fill me with inspiration."

Primula laughed gaily, and proceeded to obey; and Hetty looked over her shoulder to enjoy the ridiculous scene which followed.

"It was a sweet face certainly," said Anthony. And Primula clapped her hands with glee at the joke.

Anthony put away his pipe and seemed ready for more play. It was no wonder, Hetty had said, that he seemed to like Primula's nonsense.

By this time Primula had learned to find Smokeford a pleasant place. Her beautiful face became well known as she passed through the streets to and from her work. Young artisans and shopkeepers began to look out of their open doors at the hour for her passing, and idle gentlemen riding about the town did not fail to take note of her. Her companions were jealous, her mistress was dissatisfied with the progress of her work, and the head of the little apprentice was nearly turned with vanity.

One night Hetty, going into her bedroom, found Primula at the glass fastening a handsome pair of gold ear-rings in her ears.

"Oh, Prim!" cried Hetty, in amazement. "Why, where did you get anything so costly?"

"From a friend," said Primula, smiling, and shaking her head so that the ear-rings flashed in her ears. "From some one who likes me very much."

"Oh, Primula!"

"How cross you are, Hetty; you needn't envy me," said Primula, rubbing one of her treasures caressingly against her sleeve. "I'll lend them to you any time you like."

"You know I am not envious, cousin. You know I mean that it was wrong of you to take them."

"Why?" pouted Primula; "they were not stolen. The person who gave them is a gentleman, and has plenty of money to buy what he likes."

"Oh, you silly child! You are a baby! Don't you know that you ought not to take jewellery from any gentleman."

"You are unkind, unkind!" sobbed Primula, with the tears rolling down the creamy satin-smooth cheeks that Hetty liked to kiss and pinch. "Why do you get so angry and call me names? I will go home to Moor-edge and not annoy you any more."

"Nonsense, Prim! I won't call you baby unless you deserve it. Do you know the address of the gentleman who gave these to you? You must send them back at once."

Primula knew the address, but vowed she would keep her property. He bought them, he gave them to her, and there was nothing wrong about it. Hetty gave up talking to her and went to bed, and Primula cried herself to sleep with the treasures under her pillow.

The next day Hetty, in some distress, consulted Anthony about Primula's ear-rings. Anthony was greatly disturbed about the matter.

"I will talk to her," he said; "leave her to me, and I will make her give them back." And he spent an hour alone with her, breaking down her stubborn childish will. At the end of that time he returned to Hetty, flushed and triumphant—looking as if he had been routing an army, and bearing in his hand a little box containing the ear-rings and a piece of paper on which Primula had scrawled some words. The present went back to its donor, and Primula was sulky for a week.

One evening when the spring was coming round again, Anthony called as usual for Primula, but found that she had left the work-room early, as if for home. Arrived at the old book shop he learned that she had not returned there since leaving, as usual, in the morning for her work.

"She has gone for a walk with some of her companions," suggested Hetty.

"She went alone," replied Anthony; and he thought of the ear-rings. "I must go and look for her."

Outside the town of Smokeford there were some pleasant downs, where, in fine weather, the townspeople loved to turn out for an evening walk. It was too early in the season as yet for such strollers; and yet Anthony, when he had gone a little way on the grass, could descry two figures moving slowly along in the twilight. These were Primula and the gentleman who had given her the ear-rings; a person whom Anthony had been watching very closely for some time past, whom he had often perceived following upon Primula's steps, and whom, for his own part, he detested and despised.

"Primula!" he said, walking up to the young girl and ignoring her companion, "Come home! It is too late for you to be here unprotected."

Primula pouted and hung her head.

"The young lady is not unprotected," said the gentleman, smiling. "And pray, sir, who are you?"

"I am her nearest masculine friend," said Anthony, wrathfully; "I stand here at present in her father's place."

The gentleman laughed. "You are too young to be her father," he said. "Go away, young man, and I will bring her safely to her home when she wishes to go."

"Primula," said Anthony, white with anger, "go yonder directly to the tree, and wait there till I join you." The girl, terrified out of her senses, turned and fled as she was bidden; the gentleman raised his stick to strike this insolent tradesman who had dared to defy him; but, before it could descend, Anthony had grappled with him. There was a struggle, and Primula's admirer lay stretched on the green.

Anthony brought home the truant in silence, and for many days he came in and out of the house and did not speak to her. Primula sulked and fretted and was miserable because Anthony looked so crossly at her. Anthony was moody and dull, and Hetty, with a vague sense of coming trouble, wondered what it all could mean.

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